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SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN-TURKEY TRILATERAL: EMBASSY
DELIVERS REFTEL POINTS

REF: STATE 54917

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Turkey will promote constructive dialogue and seek to cool negative Karzai-Musharraf rhetoric during April 30 three-way, AF-PK-TU discussions, senior MFA officials told the Ambassador April 26. The GOT would like to achieve a Joint Statement and agrees that the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is a useful platform to promote reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. On refugees, Turkey offered no concrete proposals. Turkey sees the April 19 shooting incident as the type of event that dialogue should aim to prevent in the future and will press both presidents to agree to make this process an ongoing, high-level dialogue. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) Ambassador delivered reftel points April 26 to MFA Deputy Undersecretary for Middle East and South Asia Sinirlioglu and Director General Aran. The Ambassador also shared reftel points with the PM's senior foreign policy advisor Davutoglu. According to Sinirlioglu and Aran, Turkey's approach will be "hands on" but facilitative. The Turks believe they have the trust of both sides and agree that cooling the rhetoric between Pakistan and Afghanistan is essential to rebuilding confidence.

Active and Continuing High-Level GOT Participation

¶3. (C) According to Davutoglu, the idea for this meeting arose out of discussions held when FM Gul visited Afghanistan earlier this year. PM Erdogan proposed it to President Musharraf at the Arab League Summit in Riyadh, followed up by a formal invitation from President Sezer. Sezer and Erdogan will reportedly host a dinner for the presidents on April 29, and larger group discussions are planned for April 30. Although MFA Head of Department for South Asia Yoruk separately described to us Turkey's expectations as low, Sinirlioglu and Aran believe that this trilateral dialogue could be held every few months, at a lower level, possibly in Ankara or on a rotational basis. Such a grouping could meet at a Foreign Minister or Undersecretary-level, and encompass an agenda that includes terrorism, border security, refugees and economic development. Sinirlioglu suggested there may also be a follow-up trilateral later this year or early 2008.

¶4. (C) Sinirlioglu indicated that the Turks are hopeful they will be able to issue a joint statement. How ambitious it may be will depend on the talks themselves. MFA also agrees that increased OIC involvement in Afghanistan reconstruction and development should be encouraged. He mentioned that FM Gul suggested soliciting funds through OIC -- primarily from the Gulf countries -- to direct toward the reconstruction of

Kabul. Aran recognized this as a practical proposal which MFA plans to raise at the next OIC Foreign Ministers (OICFM) Summit, May 15-17, in Islamabad. Sinirlioglu stated that Turkey might also seek an endorsement of the OIC's role as an outcome of next week's meeting.

15. (C) Turkey made no pledge of assistance concerning refugee repatriation to Afghanistan. The Ambassador, stressing that the U.S. would appreciate additional Turkish generosity on Afghanistan, encouraged the GOT to use the trilateral to reinforce the parties' support for the UNHCR initiative, to which Aran replied "maybe." The MFA officials were, however, receptive to the Ambassador's encouragement to look for areas where the Turkish initiative can support the G-8's Security Policy Dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Pakistan-Afghanistan Border

16. (C) The GOT agrees that armed forces shooting at each other across the border, as occurred on April 19, is dangerous but difficult to resolve. Sinirlioglu noted that Afghanistan does not recognize the border as a border, but hopes a constructive environment in Turkey may cool tensions enough to avoid a repeat incident. He suggested that existing mechanisms might be better placed to address the mechanics of the border issue.

Musharraf Plans to Broach Issue of Bukti Terrorists

17. (C) Sinirlioglu said that President Musharraf has, on several occasions, told Turkey that he plans to broach the issue of two "Bukti" Baluchistan separatists currently in

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Afghanistan, whom he has described as "arch terrorists." Turkey will encourage flexibility on Karzai's part and discourage a confrontation with Musharraf over the issue.

PM's Advisor and Afghan Ambassador Reduce Expectations

18. (C) Davutoglu said that the real work of putting this initiative together is taking place at the prime ministry; elements referred to by Sinirlioglu and Aran may only be suggestions. Davutoglu reacted well to the idea of a joint declaration, liked the idea of an OIC connection and agreed on the urgent need for mechanisms to prevent cross-border shooting by the two countries' militaries. In a separate conversation, the Afghan ambassador here was dismissive of the upcoming meeting and of Musharraf's goodwill -- suggesting Kabul's expectations may be very low.

19. (C) COMMENT. While concrete outcomes from the April 30 meetings will be limited, the Turkish initiative enhances Turkey's constructive role in the region. END COMMENT

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